Amendments to the Claims:

1-27. (canceled)

28. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide having at least 80% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the extracellular domain of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139); or

(e) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203216,

wherein the encoded polypeptide induces ~~is capable of inducing~~ chondrocyte proliferation.

29. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 85% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the extracellular domain of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139); or

(e) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203216,

wherein the encoded polypeptide induces ~~is capable of inducing~~ chondrocyte proliferation.

30. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the extracellular domain of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139); or

(e) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203216,

wherein the encoded polypeptide induces ~~is capable of inducing~~ chondrocyte proliferation.

31. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the extracellular domain of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139); or

(e) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203216,

wherein the encoded polypeptide induces ~~is capable of inducing~~ chondrocyte proliferation.

32. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 28 encoding a polypeptide having at least 99% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the extracellular domain of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139); or

(e) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203216,

wherein the encoded polypeptide induces ~~is capable of inducing~~ chondrocyte proliferation.

33. (previously presented) An isolated nucleic acid comprising:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(d) the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139);

(e) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139); or

(f) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203216.

34. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140).

35. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140), lacking its associated signal peptide.

36. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140).

37. (canceled)

38. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139).

39. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139).

40. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 33 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203216.

41. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid that hybridizes to:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:140);

(d) the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139);

(e) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:139); or

(f) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 203216,

wherein the encoded polypeptide induces ~~is capable of inducing~~ chondrocyte proliferation.

42. (canceled)

43. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 41 which is at least 10 nucleotides in length.

44. (previously presented) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of Claim 28.

45. (previously presented) The vector of Claim 44, wherein said nucleic acid is operably linked to control sequences recognized by a host cell transformed with the vector.

sub. examiner's amend.

46. (previously presented) A host cell comprising the vector of Claim 44.

47. (previously presented) The host cell of Claim 46, wherein said cell is a CHO cell, an *E. coli* or a yeast cell.